1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FRS Ngoni FRS Mpezeni

kingdom under Sobhuza I and Mswati and the various Ngoni States. Despite their common social and cultural origin these emergent polities had each its distinctive features. The special characteristics of Ngoni society are at least in part understandable as due to the differences in its social environment as compared with Zulu and Swazi. The Ngoni were migrants, whereas Zulu and Swazi were not. The Ngoni captured a large number of men and women of non-Ngoni origin who were assimilated into the Ngoni State as individuals, whereas for the most part the Zulu and Swazi States expanded by the incorporation of existing social groups as groups, not as individuals, and these groups, if not all Ngoni in origin, at least belonged to closely allied peoples.

Thus to set the Ngoni in proper perspective we must begin with a brief description of their Ngoni forebears. In the eighteenth century the Ngoni were grouped into a large number of small chiefdoms each containing a dominant agnatic lineage segment to which the chief belonged. Each chiefdom contained segments of other lineages, and most lineages had segments in a number of chiefdoms, one segment being dominant in its chiefdom. Lineages were exogamous, their members were graded in terms of primogeniture and the ranking of wives, and as a result of quarrels segments transferred their allegiance from one chief to another or even founded new chiefdoms. Most residential settlements were small, containing only the agnatic descendants of a living man, with their wives and children, and were divided into three sections or 'houses', led by the great, right- and left-hand wives of the polygynous head of the settlement. There were also larger homesteads containing the dwellings of chiefs and other members of the dominant lineage as well as those of many genealogically unrelated dependants. The chief was assisted by his agnatic kinsmen and by the heads of non-chiefly lineage segments and by other unrelated men whom he placed as lieutenants, or indunas, in charge of districts or responsible for specific administrative, judicial or military tasks. For fighting and hunting the men of the chiefdom were organised in divisions, each attached to a royal homestead. There was also an organization of youths into small age-sets, groupings of coevals who had been circumcised together.

At the turn of the century, with the emergence of large kingdoms, each containing many chiefdoms under the leadership of a king, the age-set system changed its form and the royal homesteads acquired greater significance. Circumcision was discontinued and the age-sets began to be organized on a national basis. Each age-set constituted a regiment in the national army, had it barracks

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FRS Ngoni FRS
Mpezeni

at a royal homestead, and was led by a nominee of the king, usually a prince or chief. Other royal homesteads, called 'heads', were in charge of princes and were the foci of allegiance of groups of chiefdoms within the kingdom.

Thus every man owed allegiance in several places. He had obligations to his agnatic lineage, and in particular to that segment of the lineage within the chiefdom to which he belonged. Local matters, questions arising over land and cattle, and quarrels between neighbours, were settled by discussion between agnates or by reference to the lieutenant appointed by the chief to look after the district. Every man was also a member of a division of his chiefdom, and hunted wild beasts with his fellows in the division. He was a member of his chiefdom as against other chiefdoms, and looked to his chief for assistance in his affairs, even as the chief relied on the support of his people in his own struggles with other chiefs. In the nation, every man belonged to a regiment, fought and danced alongside his regimental age-mates drawn from every chiefdom, and was expected to support the prince who commanded the regiment. Finally he was a member of a 'head' and within his regiment was grouped together with others from the same head. A man might change his chiefdom, but his allegiance to regiment and head were fixed.[1]

The Ngoni State was founded in the 1820's by men and women, perhaps a thousand in number, who had grown up in a social system of this kind. Certain parts of the system were dropped, others were developed. In effect, the system was simplified and adapted to the life of migrant brigandage which the Ngoni enjoyed for some seventy years. The old alignment of agnatic lineages disappeared, for the great majority of Ngoni joined the system by capture, not by birth. In its place a quasi-agnatic residential system was evolved, in which men and women bore allegiance not to their own agnatic seniors but to their lord or captor. This system was, however, tied in with an arrangement of royal homesteads which in itself was a development of the division of polygynous households into great, left- and right-hand 'houses'. There were no chiefdoms within the nation, for the nation began, as it were, as a *tabula rasa* without significant relics of earlier chiefly alignments. The age-set system remained the basis of military organization, but there were no royal or chiefly commanders appointed over regiments and there were no regimental barracks. Instead the bulk of the population lived in large villages which resembled the former royal homesteads and military barracks but in which men

[1] Based on Bryant, *Olden times*, and Gluckman, 'Kingdom of the Zulu'.

1:Barnes E-S (1946-1949)954 F85 Ngoni F85
Mpezeni

worship. They allowed the local chiefs to govern their people according to their own laws and customs, but under the authority of the Ngoni. They followed the method of governing which Europeans call "indirect rule".[1] They also took selected children from the conquered peoples and reared them as Ngoni in Ngoni villages. Young's account supports this.[2] Whether or not this method of government was wise is clearly a matter of opinion. It is perhaps significant that for Mpezeni's people the evidence provided by the present disposition of persons claiming descent from different ethnic groups suggests that a different policy was followed there. Chibambo and Young talk of groups of warriors under Mwambera belonging to various subjugated tribes; in Mpezeni's area captured men appear to have been drafted into the various age-set regiments, so that men from the same tribe were distributed throughout the army and did not form a distinct group. Territorially, the dispersion of captives from the same tribe was not so complete, for it appears that in Mpezeni's group the major segment settled on the east of the Ngoni area raided mostly to the east, and the western segment to the west, and so on, so that many of the captives taken from a particular locality were to be found in the major segment of the State nearest their homeland. Yet even this concentration of captives with the same ethnic origin was not complete, and representatives from all the principal tribes with whom the Ngoni came into contact are nowadays to be found in all parts of Mpezeni's Ngoniland. We suggest that this policy of assimilation, practised to a much greater degree by Mpezeni than by Mwambera, may be correlated with the fact that in Mpezeni's group there were no revolts by groups of captives of common origin, whereas in Mwambera's there were three such revolts, by Lake Tonga, Kamanga and Henga tribesmen.

Mwambera attacked the Cewa chief Mwase Kasungu some time round about 1860, and was driven off in the face of fire from guns Mwase had obtained from Arabs. He subsequently came to an agreement with Mwase whereby the Cewa chief became his 'child' and lent him soldiers armed with guns to assist in Ngoni raids. Travellers suggest that later Mwase came to an agreement with Mpezeni as well, but this is not so certain. Mpezeni does seem to have established peaceful relations with one or two minor chieftains during the period of early European contact,[3] but for

[1] Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, pp. 39-41; Young, *History*, p. 119.

[2] e.g. Cuanda, a Kunda chief and Mauro, who had Kunda and Nsenga connexions. Poole, *Native tribes*, p. 11; Sharpe, 'Journey from Lake Nyassa', p. 746.

Library E-5 (1946-1949)954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

because of a divergence of interest between one or more of its inferior segments and the residue. In some instances all the people in the segment were killed, as presumably was the intention when Zwangendaba sent warriors to destroy segment 18. In other instances not everyone was killed and those whose lives were spared were divided to some other part of a major segment to which they belonged. In the only examples I know of, in which either of these last two alternatives was adopted, action was taken by the highest lieutenants in the segments founded for the great wives of reigning chiefs, and was prompted by allegedly hostile acts directed against the chief. Heads of lesser segments could not readily act in this way for although the Paramount Chief and his lieutenants did not possess a monopoly of this power, they regarded its exercise by others with suspicion as a threat to the unity of the State.

If some of the members of an eliminated segment escaped annihilation, they might presently reform themselves into a new segment and begin a separate existence again. If they were not kinsmen of their lord, no structural complications ensued. If, however, relatives of the lord were concerned, then there might be conflict between the position required of them because of their relationship and that in which their new segment was formed. Thus, if the village of a great wife was annihilated and later a new village was founded for her, this could never replace the original one. Her subordinate bands of co-wives had formed their villages by breaking out from her original village, and that had been their headquarters. The new village was founded after they had made their own, and was not their headquarters, even though they still acknowledged that its head was their great co-wife. As we have seen, such a sequence of events occurred at a critical stage of Ngoni history, and may have influenced the way in which the State split.

2. *Age-sets*

The residential system was dominant in deciding the alignment of persons in most situations, but the waging of war and execution of certain ceremonies were organized on a different basis. The army was divided into age-set regiments. About every three or four years,[1] depending on the military requirements and on the availability of lads of the right age, a new regiment was formed from all the boys aged about fifteen years old. They assembled at the Paramount Chief's great wife's village and were inducted into the army. The chief gave them a regimental name and they came under the orders of his senior lieutenants. An experienced warrior

[1] cf. Wilson, 'Expedição', p. 470.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FRS Ngoni FRS
Mpezeni

from a senior regiment was given command of the new regiment. This post seems not to have been politically so important as it was among the Zulu, where princes commanded regiments. In major battles, regiments fought as tactical units.

A list of regimental names is given in Table III. Some regiments had more than one proper name, and sometimes that portion of a regiment belonging to a single major segment was given a name of its own.

The regimental system was more formally prescribed than the residential system, in that every lad had to join, and his regiment was, at least initially, fixed for him by his apparent age. But even here there was some possibility of manipulation. Men were expected to defer to members of senior age-sets and a well-favoured warrior might gain promotion from one regiment to the next above, either because of his own prowess in war or because the senior regiment was short of men. There were some offices of leadership within a regiment, but I was unable to discover what they were or how they were filled. Certain warriors were selected for special tasks, such as spying or scouting or forming an advance guard. But the greatest measure of flexibility derived from the nature of the activities carried on under this system. Some men fought well, others did not. Some survived and some were killed in battle. The successful warrior was rewarded by his superiors with dependants and thus he established his own segment. Thus success in one system led to advancement in the other.

On national raids one or more regiments were mobilized and were commanded by a senior lieutenant from the Paramount Chief's great wife's segment. Some informants said that in the line of battle men from the same segment were separated, so that there would be less chance of their being killed all at once. However within a regiment there must have been cleavages on segmentary lines, for at least in later years the leader of a major segment would from time to time mobilize all the men in his segment belonging to certain regiments and send them off raiding. Thus the Ngoni military system differed from the Zulu, in which the king alone was able to mobilize age-sets. Some of the segmentary divisions within Ngoni regiments had their own proper names. In battle, the men of a regiment might be divided for tactical reasons but this was not a lasting arrangement, and the only permanent cleavages within a regiment appear to have been those determined by the residential system. There does not seem to have been any system of non-territorial sectors, nor was there any organization, apart from the State-organized regiments, by which men of a single segment

[Text continues on page 39]

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 F'85 Ngoni F'85
Mpezeni

TABLE III. RECONSTRUCTED NAMES

Man's replacements		Approximate year of formation	Woman's replacements	
Information given	Information given		Information given	Information given
Majakwana		1821		
Zulumbo		1824		
Gumbula		1827		
Mavhuya		1830		
Imiti				
Zimpondo		1833		
Mahlangu		1836		
Ngwenyaga, Mavilivinga		1839		
Mangwiti, Magwai		1842		
Malungu, Mavimba (a)		1845		
Mamili, Mahlagi		1848		
Manyoka, Zinyoka		1851		
Manyima, Manyisa		1854		
Majimila		1857		
Majunga, Mayunga		1860		
Maiyisa (c)		1863		
	Zinkhomdo, Maraiya	1865		
Mamba		1868		
	Mazuna	1869		
Mazda (d)		1871		
Zinyati	Manyala	1874		
	Malivuna (b)	1877		Mazuna
Mazda (d)		1879		
Mazuna, Mavuna		1882		
	Kalumula	1885	Mashamhina	Mazubwa
	Mahlahlambini	1889	Magalela	Mashamba
Lumbuni, Maiyisa (c)	Cimala, Lumbuimula	1892	Mashamula	Mahanya
	Muni, Cinamuno	1895	Mairhuna	Mrhela ng'umba
	Azula	1900	Maraiya	
	Ngwazaza (c)	1906	Mambanya	
	Ngwaiaiya	1910	Mavuna	
	Ciwumbula, Ngwaya	1914		Mrhela
	Kalumba, Mavhuno	1920	Gwaula	

[Footnotes on page 59]

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 F'85 Ngoni F'85
Mpezeni

could assemble for hunting and fighting, similar to the sections attached to chiefly villages among the Zulu.[1]

Women were organized into parallel age-sets, led by daughters of the royal line and other important young women. Men and women of corresponding sets danced together on ceremonial occasions, and among themselves women in a regiment used to fight 'to see who was strongest'. After marriage a woman ceased to participate actively in these regimental dances and fights.

The most important national festival was the first fruits ceremony held annually at the headquarters of Zwangendaba's great wife's segment. This was organized on an age-set basis, and there was much competitive dancing. Special songs were sung, and on conclusion of the ceremony a large national raid might be undertaken.

The Ngoni depended largely on the efficiency of their army for the continual inflow of captives on which the strength and continued existence of the State depended. The age-set system provided them with an efficient army, and in addition was a means whereby the centrifugal tendency inherent in their segmentary system was partly checked.

Each major segment had members in each regiment, and each regiment was drawn from every major segment. It provided the central authority with an instrument by which the segments could be held together, for on national raids the young men of every segment were in danger. No one segment, save the State itself, could claim the glory for a successful battle, but only the regiments involved. The Paramount Chief did not possess a complete monopoly of force, for we have already noted that sometimes segment heads organized their own raids. But these were small affairs,

[1] cf. Gluckman, 'Kingdom of the Zulu', p. 31.

(a) Mpezeni I's regiment. Lancaster says Mpezeni I was in Mayunge.
(b) Nzunga's regiment.
(c) Mpezeni II's regiment.
(d) Mzoka. Wilson and some of my informants support the earlier position; Lancaster and other of my informants support the later one.
(e) Mulyiza. Lancaster and one of my informants support the earlier position; a more reliable informant supports the later one.

Wilson gives two other regimental names. He Mabwela or Mabola is merely the status term mabola, meaning 'mature, respected and important men'. His other regimental name, Madzinga or Madjinga, is probably also a status term, meaning 'very old men'. Rangeley has the names Tatakalulu, Mang'ombe, Inimpini, Makeke, Mahacu, Zimfini, Manyoni.

Sources: twenty-three independent informants, offering partly conflicting accounts; Wilson, 'Expedição', p. 477, and 'Geschichte', p. 195; Lancaster, 'Chronology', p. 82; Rangeley, 'Mwalo', p. 50.

[Footnotes pertain to Table III, page 38. - Analyst]

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)954 F85 Ngoni F85
Mpezeni

involving perhaps between a dozen and a hundred men, whereas the Paramount Chief could, so long as the State remained intact, command the services of perhaps 10,000 warriors.

This unifying effect of the age-set system applied particularly to the recent captives. It appears to have been through the regimental system that recent captives, both men and women, were indoctrinated into Ngoni ways and made to feel that they, too, were Ngoni. In the residential system, recent captives were dependants rather than lords. In the age-set system there was no such distinction. Men captives were drafted into the regiment appropriate to their apparent age, and boys were enrolled with their comrade. They were called upon to fight in the same way as their aristocratic comrades, and were offered the same prospects of promotion, both within the age-set system and in the supernumerary organization, as a result of successful fighting. Many of the well-remembered segment heads who achieved rapid promotion after capture are described as being successful warriors.

The annual first fruits ceremony (*ukweela*) was organized on an age-set basis. Although I was not able to establish details of this ceremony, it is clear that it was the most memorable national ceremony in the year, and that it provided supernatural sanction to the cohesion of the State and of the various regiments, under the leadership of the Paramount Chief. There were dances and mock fighting between regiments, and women also fought with each other in age-set groups of some kind or other. Read states that the description of the ceremony she was given showed much similarity with the corresponding Swazi ceremony. Commentators on the Swazi and Zulu ceremonies describe them as strengthening the army and the kingship and unifying the nation, by a dramatic exaggeration of the conflicts as well as the links within it, and it is probable that this was true also of the Ngoni.[1]

The Ngoni and their neighbours formed part of a wide social system, and the relationship between them was a political one. When the Ngoni moved from place to place, the area round them was vacated by its former inhabitants, so as to leave a dwelling-area for the Ngoni and a no-man's-land isolating it from other inhabited areas. These moves were forced on the indigenous people by Ngoni raids. There were no direct relations between States, for there was little concerted opposition to Ngoni raiding

[1] cf. Read, 'Tradition', p. 470; Kuper *African Aristocracy*, pp. 223-5; Gluckman, 'First fruits ceremonies', pp. 30-3. The Swazi ceremony is called *incwala*, and Read's informants called it *ingwala*, but my informants had lost their click consonants.

1:Barnes E-5 (1966-1969) 954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

and the Ngoni did not seek to vanquish other tribes as states but rather to exhaust them by continued attrition. In later years it appears that a few minor chiefs who lived near the Fort Jameson group did manage to come to some agreement with it, for the Ngoni seem to have raided them only sporadically although warriors passed through their territory en route for more distant objectives; but this may have been due to the intervention of European traders. The powerful Chewa chief, Mwase Kasungu, may also have come to some arrangement with the Fort Jameson group even as he did with the Ngoni of northern Nyasaland.

Thus for the most part the external relations of the Ngoni State were warlike. The Ngoni did not trade with their neighbours, or send ambassadors to them, or enter into alliances with them; they merely killed or captured them.[1] The army was organized on a basis of age-sets, but the age-sets as such did not enter into political relations with their enemies. They merely executed the policy of the State or of the major segment to which they belonged.

3. *Officers of State*

The residential and age-set systems formed the structure of the State and there was no separate administrative system. There was little specialization of function among those who wielded power in the State, and those who did have special governmental tasks were all the lords of large segments.

The nearest approach to special political officers is to be found among the regional governors. A few of Zwangendaba's followers were with him from the beginning of his journey from Natal. Some of these were his agnates, but the descendants of others have now forgotten what relationship, if any, they bore to him. These early followers did not stand in the lord-lieutenant relationship to Zwangendaba, for in Ngoni usage all lieutenants were captives, or the descendants of captives, of their lords. They were organized in segments in the same way as everyone else, but the heads of some of these segments were known by the special term *mulumuzana* which I have translated as regional governor. Segments headed by regional governors were attached like other large segments to the various royal headquarters, and thus became primary divisions of the segments formed for queens. They differed from the lieutenants of the royal headquarters not only in their title but also in the greater freedom they were allowed in their segments. They kept their own villages separate from the royal villages to which they were attached politically.

[1] See pp. 15f.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

sanctions were less effective than they are in more homogeneous societies; but this can hardly be proved. The fact remains that some segments did break off, that the State attempted to annihilate them, and that sometimes they were successful, probably sometimes not. The transition was sharp between the condition in which a segment was an integral loyal part of the State and that in which it was itself a new State. Spatially a State was surrounded by a no-man's-land. Everything inside the uninhabited ring of country was in the State, everything outside it was not. Within the State there was no feuding such as sometimes characterizes societies whose political boundaries are not uniquely defined. In Ngoni society, murder was punished by the State, and the cattle paid by the murderer's kin were handed over to the Paramount Chief, not to the kin of the murdered man. The Paramount Chief, it is true, usually handed on the cattle to them, but the method of settlement is indicative of the power of the State. There was only one national first fruits ceremony, accompanied by summary penalties of death for those whose actions threatened its mystical effectiveness, as for example by singing the ceremonial songs at the wrong time. Furthermore, there was a single age-set system, in which the members of each set were drawn from all segments, and because of the activities of the sets, the segments united in aggression against the external world.

When a split threatened, the issue was decided by force of arms. Yet in a quite significant sense the cohesion of the State was not based on force at all. The Paramount Chief had no monopoly of force, for as we have seen there were representatives of every major segment in each age-set, and any lord who could claim the loyal support of his segment had at his disposal a fighting force as efficient as that of anyone else. Within the army there was little or no technical, as distinct from tactical, specialization and the Paramount Chief had no bodyguard or other specially recruited force on which he could rely. The Ngoni were contemptuous of guns, for the Tower muskets used by the Arabs and others could not penetrate their shields at normal firing range, and such guns as the Ngoni possessed were used only for making a noise.[48] There was no strong central power posed against the provincial lords, as in some societies. The strength of any segment was measured by its internal cohesion, its size and fighting ability, as matched against the cohesion, size and ability of the forces that could be marshalled against it. While he was loyal, expansion in a man's segment

[48] Wiese, 'Expedição', p. 477, and 'Geschichte', p. 196; Read, 'Tradition', p. 461, n.1; Young, *History*, p. 125.

I:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FRS Ngoni FRS
Mpezeni

before it can be moved further. The same accumulation of snow then begins again with each fragment.

We can readily see that this system was one of great flexibility. The rules of the system were fairly definite, and the principles of agnatic descent and primogeniture were never violated. Yet it was a system very susceptible to manipulation, and one appropriate to a society with a rapidly expanding population recruited mainly by capture. The relationships between a man and his wives, his sons, and his other dependants provided the basis for differentiation within his segment, but they did not determine in advance which wife should be made leader of a bevy, which bevy should get most dependants, which of his younger sons he should favour, which dependants he would appoint as lieutenants.

Without a continual inflow of captives this wide pattern of segmentation might not have produced anything more than a lineage system on the same lines as the Zulu and Swazi. The captives were the bulk which swelled the segments, which benefited one segment at the expense of another. This system provided quasi-agnatic affiliation to people whose actual parentage was unknown or irrelevant. Because of this source of supply, much greater segmentation was achieved in each generation than was possible in an orthodox lineage system. The whole system lasted only seventy-seven years for the Fort Jameson group, corresponding roughly to three generations, yet almost the whole population of the Ngoni groups stemming from Zwangendaba, numbering perhaps half a million people, could at the end of that time trace quasi-agnatic ascent back to him or his forebears.

Membership of age-sets gave rise to one set of bonds which cut across the lines of segmentary division; those bonds created by marriage gave rise to another. A man in one segment was linked by ties of affinity to men in several others, and because of these ties interacted with them on formal and informal occasions, exchanged cattle with them, and had a joint interest with them in their common descendants. Though segments were not exogamous, a wife from a structurally distant segment had in general a higher status and was more likely to be selected as leader of a bevy than was one from the same minor segment as her husband. Within a segment a son of the lord might marry the daughter of a lieutenant, and lieutenants sometimes married daughters of their lord, thus blending the bonds of affinity with those of quasi-agnation. As the heads of segments, married women played a more important role than we usually associate with them in strongly patrilineal societies. The lady of a segment retained her connexion with the segments

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

to which she had belonged before her marriage, and in particular sent some of her children to her parents to be cared for until adolescence. In this way a web of affinal ties was built up, cutting across both the residential and age-set systems and acting against the fissile tendencies in the former.[47]

The ties that bound a man to his age-mates and to his matrilateral kin cut across those linking him to his lord and to his dependants. Nevertheless, it seems probable that even without this arrangement of cross-cutting ties, the segmentary system itself was not easily fissile. The State as a whole was primarily held together by its enemies, the external enemies who made it unsafe for small bodies of Ngoni to venture across the no-man's-land on their own, and the internal rivals who competed for the Paramount Chief's favour and who bided their time until they could lead off their major segments as independent states. The flexibility of the system allowed men to achieve power within it, and provided a way of balancing the interests of different groups, as well as making possible the few instances of fission that did occur. The Paramount Chief was powerful, not only because of his mystical attributes and of the military successes of his people, but because he was the government. Through him the common interests of the tribe as a whole were expressed in an organized manner as against the interests of minority groups. Despite its segmentary form, Ngoni society was a State.

In later years two changes took place which increased the stability of the State, at least from a short-term point of view. In the first place, the external environment altered due to the penetration into the central African hinterland by Arabs, Portuguese and British. With this topic we shall deal in Chapter III. The second change, which seems to have taken place among the Ngoni of northern Nyasaland, was in the internal organization of the State. In that particular group, neighbouring tribes were brought under subjection as political groups, not as individuals, and the conquered peoples were either allowed to retain their own chiefs as subordinate rulers or else were attached in large batches to various important headquarters. A distinction emerged between the aristocracy and the conquered peoples, and the army was no longer simply the aggregation of age-sets but included quasi-professionals supplied by a near-by unconquered Cewa chief Mwase Kasungu, who were armed with guns. Similar changes may well have taken place among the Ngoni groups in Tanganyika, who were more closely involved with the slave trade to the coast

[47] See the discussion of affinal linking in my *Marriage*, pp. 10-11.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

Ngoni origin. The sharp cleavage between the Ngoni and their neighbours has gone.

Another relic of the privileged position enjoyed by the Ngoni before the conquest which did not long survive their defeat was the subsidy paid to Mpezeni. Under the terms of Wiese's alleged concession of 14 April 1891, Mpezeni was to be paid £200 a year and one per cent of Wiese's profits. Wiese made presents to Mpezeni, but there is no record of any substantial payment. When the provisional grant of 10,000 square miles of land was made by the B.S.A. Company to the Mozambique Company on 8 May 1895, the latter agreed not to exercise any rights it might have under Wiese's concessions, but there was no mention of the disposal of any possible obligations. Warton continued Wiese's practice of giving presents to Mpezeni, but there was no regular payment. As Wiese's concession had never been recognized it would seem that there was no legal obligation on either the North Charterland or the B.S.A. Company to pay an annual subsidy. Nevertheless after the Ngoni war the two companies must have come to some agreement on the matter. In April 1898, according to the answer to a question in the Commons, the B.S.A. Company were ready to pay Mpezeni £200 a year 'for the present'. In January 1900 the Administrator stated that the Collector at Fort Jameson had spent only £50 during the current financial year on payments to Mpezeni and 'his loyal indunas'. He proposed to spend a further £50 during the year and the remaining £100 of the subsidy was to be distributed among the surrounding tribes in the interests of the North Charterland.[5] These special arrangements were presumably superseded in 1903 when, under the scheme of Native Administration drawn up in that year, provision was made for the payment of all recognized chiefs from the general funds of the Territory.

Similarly, the military organization of the Ngoni broke down after the conquest. One of the first acts of the Administration was to forbid Ngoni to carry weapons of war.[6] Four new age-set regiments were formed between 1898 and 1914 but they were little more than dancing societies, singing the old songs which had excited their seniors in the 'time of peace' before the conquest but unable to emulate their military achievements. During the 1914-18 war the majority of young Ngoni men who might have formed a new age-set were enrolled as carriers and soldiers on the Allied side.

[5] *Parliamentary Debates, 4th Series*, lv (1898), cols. 1654-5; report of a meeting between Administrator and North Charterland manager, 15 January 1900 (Lusaka archives); cf. Poole, MS., 'Tribes of East Luangwa Province'.

[6] Wiese, 'Geschichte', p. 201.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

After the war an age-set was formed but its activities conflicted with the demands of the churches and schools and it was not a success. No further attempts have been made to carry on the system. Ngoni now say, 'What need have we of regiments now that there are no other tribes for us to fight?'

2. *White control*

Apart from the squabble over cattle, the surrender of Mpezeni on 9 February 1898 marked the end of the Ngoni war. The Nyasaland troops did not pursue the leaders who fled, although Brake moved Mpezeni to the vicinity of Fort Manning. In May he wrote, perhaps over-optimistically, that in the central part of Ngoniland rebuilding had begun.[7]

It is clear that at first the Ngoni acquiesced in their defeat. Whereas prior to the war Whites had lived in their country on sufferance, now their right to be there was not challenged. Only a few months after the war Harding arrived, recruiting police for service in Southern Rhodesia. He was received in a 'most friendly manner by the chief in charge who gave an ocular demonstration of his loyalty by voluntarily and immediately handing over to my charge 200 of his young men for my newly formed Police Force...'.[8] After the death of Mpezeni I, his lieutenants waited the traditional period of a year. Mpezeni's heir Nsingu and his wife Mkucwa had both been shot during the war, and in September 1901 the lieutenants petitioned the Administration to appoint their eldest son, Ciloa, aged about 10 years, as chief. On 23 July 1903 the Native Commissioner held a meeting at which Madzimawi, son of Mpezeni I in the residue of segment 4, asked to be allowed to take the name Zwangendaba.[9] Thus even at that early date the over-riding authority of the Administration was acknowledged in matters concerning the chieftainship.

The establishment of an Administration based on Fort Jameson in 1898 was governed, in so far as the British legal system was concerned, by the legislation consolidated in the Foreign Jurisdiction Act 1890.[10] Relations between the Administration and its African subjects were controlled by the Africa Order in Council 1889.[11] This was superseded by later Orders in 1900, 1911 and 1924,[12] marking the delimitation of North-Eastern Rhodesia as a separate

[7] 198; 201, fo. 69.
[8] Harding, *Far Bugles*, p. 82.
[9] *Reports on the Administration*, 1900-2, p. 408; see pp. 1390*f*.
[10] 53 & 54 Vict., c. 37.
[11] *S.R. & O.*, Rev., 1890, iii, pp. 259-332.
[12] *S.R. & O.*, 89 of 1900, 438 of 1911 and 324 of 1924.

allowed to marry and settle down in their villages.[1] Since he also had the sole right of forming a new regiment of young men and giving it a name, he controlled the intake to the army as well as the discharge of seasoned warriors.

The big war *induna* served directly under the Paramount. Associated with him were other subordinate war leaders or *izinduna*, one of whom was always at the head of each regiment. Considerable emphasis was laid by Cibambo and other Ngoni informants on the essentially military character, in pre-European days, of the office and function of the *izinduna*, who were officials serving the whole kingdom. We shall see in Chapters III, IV and V how the term *induna* was also used for civil officials at the royal village and in the courts, as well as for the men in charge of sections of a village and of houses.

The account of the mobilization of the army shows that the Ngoni had changed the system of military barracks concentrated about the capital, described by Gluckman as typical of the Zulu military organization and by Kuper for the Swazi. Gluckman said that the chiefs assembled their people in territorial, not age, divisions, and that the age regiments belonged to the king alone and lived in or near his capital.[2] In pre-European days the Ngoni, according to Cibambo and to other informants, had in their armies territorial divisions as well as age regiments, and there was no concentration of young warriors by age regiments round the Paramount's village.[3]

When a summons to war went forth, the warriors in the territory of each chief or *mulumuzana* assembled at his head village as a *libandla*. This included the warriors from the outlying villages and from the head village. Cibambo's use of the term *libandla* emphasized that it was a territorial unit, divided into *mabuto* (which he called sections) on the basis of age.

When each *libandla* arrived at the Paramount's village ready for warfare, the different age groups within it joined up with their parallel age groups from other *mabandla* to form regiments. The Ngoni term for these national regiments was *mabuto*, the same term as that used for the age divisions of the *mabandla*. Old men who had been warriors in their youth expressed to me many times their immense pride in their own *libuto*, and it had for them something of the tradition and prestige of a famous school. They would recite the names of other *mabuto*, beginning with their own as the most recent, and going backwards through ten or more regimental names to those who had crossed the Zambesi with

[1] Cibambo in the text spoke of warriors wearing the head-ring. The usual practice, according to informants, was to give the head-ring at the end of service in the army. Cibambo may have been referring to former warriors with a head-ring putting on war-dress for a ceremony.

[2] Gluckman, M. 'The Kingdom of the Zulu', in *African Political Systems*, 1940, p. 31.

[3] One example of a concentration of young men was reported at the village of the Queen Mother in the central kingdom in 1898 in *The Central African Times*, see Memorandum XVI, International African Institute, 1938, p. 18.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

Zwangendaba or Mputa. Some informants showed that there was not always agreement about the use of the terms *mabandla* and *mabuto* when relating stories of the past, and the connotation of age regiment was sometimes given to *mabandla*. Cibambo and the other Ngoni historians who used the Ngoni language habitually were, however, quite clear about the differentiation between the two terms, one being territorial and the other denoting an age group. This use of the term *libuto* was confirmed by Dr. Kuper in her account of Swazi military organization.[1]

The organization of Ngoni warfare included the use of divining and of medicines to ensure success in war, and the summoning of the men charged to carry out these functions. In both Ngoni kingdoms there were men alive at the time of my visits who knew the medicines for war and had performed the functions of a 'war-medicine doctor'. According to these informants there was no sharp division between the functions of the diviner and the 'doctor' in relation to their services to the kingdom and to the army. There were individuals who had acted in both capacities. The diviner's task was to prophesy about probable success in war and about attacks from the enemy. He might, and sometimes did, combine this with 'doctoring' the army.

The preparation and administering of medicines to strengthen the army were discussed by informants in terms of two main types of medicine and a third which was less often referred to. The two main types were *intonga* and *intelezi* and the third one *inhlenza*. In the northern kingdom Mopo Jere, who had been a 'war doctor' and was the son of a former famous 'war doctor', insisted that the term *intonga* could be used in several different ways: for medicines made of roots; for a rod or stick (*uduku*) which was medicated; and occasionally for the 'doctor' who used these objects. He also emphasized that each chief or *mabizana* had his own *intonga* and performed ceremonies for his own warriors before they left his kraal for that of the Paramount, where they went through another ceremony of having medicines administered to them before going on the campaign.

Formerly the *intonga*, that is, the stick or rod, was treated with the root of a shrub ground up and mixed with water. A beast was then killed, the Paramount ate the meat in the kraal with his senior men, and the skin was made into a bag in which the medicated *intonga* was placed. This skin bag containing the *intonga* was carried in front of the army when it was on the march. It could only be carried and handled when with the army by boys who had not yet reached puberty. The *intonga* in its bag was pointed at the enemy, as the army drew near, to make his warriors tremble and feel powerless and take to their heels. Its potency to make men powerless was so strong that no man from the Ngoni army dared walk in front of it, lest he too should lose all his strength.

[1] Kuper, H. 'The Development of the Military Organization in Swaziland.' *Africa*, Vol. X, No. 4, p. 274.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

visits or on special occasions. In the central kingdom, where an important man's sisters often married in the village and stayed there, it was evident that they often exercised authority over their brother's children.

In polygynous Ngoni families the relationship between siblings was marked by strong attachment. Among the boys in the *laweni* brothers united to protect their younger brothers from other boys, and in the families of Swazi clans brothers showed many signs of youthful intolerance and arrogance towards boys of other clans, especially in matters concerning cattle and their herding. Sibling rivalry among boys was to a large extent controlled by two factors. One was the *laweni* system where the age-set principle predominated. The other was the division into the big house and *gogo* house, where the children of the *gogo* house knew that they stood in a different relationship to succession and authority in the village from their brothers and sisters in the big house. Within the big house itself, sons of the big wife knew that succession was regulated by seniority, and that the eldest son would expect to get priority when he married and it was necessary to allot cattle for *lobola*. The brother-sister link between children of the same mother was, as we have seen, a very close one, especially with the older sister of a man who was heir to a high position. This sister in her relation to his children carried almost the same authority as he did. Among sisters of the same family there was less apparent cohesion, except among very high-ranking Swazi clans where the girl children were looked after by special nursemaids and had their instruction in correct behaviour together from the older woman known as their *gogo*.

Ngoni grandparents on the paternal side showed little of the joking relationship with their grandchildren sometimes associated with this tie. When children went to visit their maternal grandparents in another village there was noticeably more ease between them and more indulgence was shown. In their father's village children were always aware that his parents were persons of standing and authority. Girls over six or seven often slept in their paternal grandmother's hut if she was a widow, and were aware that, though she showed kindliness in providing for their needs, she was a firm disciplinarian in all matters of behaviour.

Within the family group the male role of leadership was unquestioned. Honour and respect were a man's due from wives as well as from children. In difficult relations within his family, as in the case of divorce, he could count on counsel and support from his brothers, who were also ready to help him if cattle were needed for his own or his son's marriage or for payment of court penalties. This male circle of father and sons, father's brothers and their sons, was a closely knit group which functioned in regulating family affairs and in buying and selling cattle for the house to which they belonged. An obligation to help his sons was recognized by the father of a family and this obligation

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

boys and young men, so long as they were in the village. Ngoni men insisted that their children should be correctly trained, and they were contemptuous of Cewa and other tribal groups who left it 'all to the women'. The handing on of correct behaviour by the mother-in-law to her daughter-in-law was, they considered, essential, and one of the reasons why young men in the central kingdom liked to 'marry up' was that they could count on the careful grounding in all the canons of behaviour which their wives had received.

CHAPTER V

AGE SETS

THE Ngoni brought with them to Nyasaland an age-set system akin to that among the South-eastern Bantu, which was an important element in their social structure. In pre-European days the division into cattle-herders or pre-warriors, warriors, and post-warriors or senior men, regulated the tasks and responsibilities of boys and men in other spheres besides those of warfare. At the beginning of this section, when reviewing age sets as one of the constituent forms of Ngoni social organization, I said that some features of an age-set system had persisted. In comparison with age-grouping in the other Nyasaland tribes it was distinctively Ngoni in form; it influenced behaviour patterns in inter-group and intra-group relations; and in it were recognized certain responsibilities and activities belonging to the different groups based on age.

Among the distinctively Ngoni elements in the age-set system were the private nature of the puberty ritual and the absence of initiation schools; the organization of boys' life in the *lawini*; the strong ties between age mates up to marriage; the selective principle in designating senior men and women as *madoda* and *manina*; and a different kind of selective principle in the formation of friendship pacts between individuals of the same age. In observing the role of age sets in Ngoni village society, the two main groups which were constantly in evidence as groups were the older boys and girls and the senior men and women. These groups not only carried out activities together, but also showed evidence of the strength of the internal ties linking members of an age set. There were, however, no sharp edges to these groups, either in terms of actual age or physiological development or of exclusive membership. The following list of terms applied to age sets in the two main Ngoni areas shows primarily the difference in designation between males and females according to broad age grouping, but it illustrates also the fact that the terminology applied to the age sets did not always coincide

561 with the main activities of the groups, though it did to some extent illustrate mutual relationships.

Age-Set terms

	Northern Ngoni	*Central Ngoni*
All children	*abantwana*	*ana*
Young men even if married	*amajaha*	*anyamata*
Young girls before puberty	*inkakazana*	*mabuthu*
Young girls past puberty	*izintombi*	*anamwali*
All married women	*abafazi*	*akazi*
Senior men	*amadoda*	*madoda*
Senior women	*amanina*	*manina*

513 561 866 One of the most characteristic forms of Ngoni village organization was the *laweni*, or boys' dormitory. It included the older boys in the group called 'children' and the young men until they married, who were in fact called *amajaha* after they had left the *laweni* and married and had huts of their own. The age for entering the *laweni* was approximately seven years, and was as a rule determined by the age when a child began to get his second teeth. When a child was going about the village with several gaps in his front teeth, his companions jeered at him if he still slept in his grandmother's hut, and his father took the view that it was time he stopped playing like a child and took up seriously the job of herding goats and calves. There was often some hesitation, especially among boys who were not so well grown for their age, at taking the plunge and going to live in the *laweni*, since once made the step could not be retraced. It was primarily an individual decision. It meant leaving the protective affectionate care of the grandmother in the evenings, and the care-free play all day round the mother's hut with meals provided by her, for a different sort of existence altogether. *Laweni* life was rigorous and was dominated by the senior boys living in the hut. The younger ones were at their mercy, and were made to 'fag' for their elders, clean up the hut, sometimes steal food from their mothers' stores, and were beaten if they were slow or careless, or if they threatened to tell the elders in the village what went on in the *laweni*. The main weapon to get boys into the *laweni* was the ridicule of their fellows. Once members of the *laweni* group they were disciplined into obedience by threats and beating. The age range within a *laweni* was often considerable, from seven to seventeen years.

626

233 857 561 All the boys in a *laweni* who were members of houses possessing cattle—and this as a rule included all sons of Ngoni families of trans-Zambesi clans—had to take part in herding. Cattle-herding was a responsible task and could be an arduous one. The boys got up before dawn, opened the gate of the kraal, and took the cattle to water. They milked the cattle on an open space near the village and carried the milk in wooden jars, gourds or petrol tins to the owner of the cattle, keeping

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

some for themselves as their perquisite. They then drove the cattle to pasture, and this might be some distance away when grass was scarce in the dry season. They sometimes drove the cattle back near the village to rest at noon under the shade trees, but if the pasture was far away the cattle rested there and went on feeding later. They were brought back to the kraal in the late afternoon and counted by one of the senior men.

The herd-boys taught each other to fight with sticks, to wrestle, to catch rats and small birds, to use the knobkerry, catapults, and bows and arrows. Sometimes in the afternoon they went to other villages and challenged another herd to a fight between bulls.[1] During the long day's herding, the boys used to drink milk, make *amasi* (milk curds) in a gourd and eat it, bake birds in clay and roast ears of maize taken from their mothers' grain stores. Precedence among the herd-boys depended first on age and only secondly on the rank and position of the families they belonged to. There was an easily recognizable air of authority and almost of arrogance among the older boys responsible for their fathers' and uncles' cattle. They superintended the process of letting out the cattle, milking them, driving them to pasture and the return to the kraal in the evening. Mounted on donkeys, wearing large straw hats made by themselves, the senior boys acted like ranch owners bossing up inefficient work hands.

This period of living in the *laweni* was, as we have seen, shared by boys of a wide age group. In a large village where there were two or three or four *laweni*, there was often one in each section, which generally meant that the boys belonging to one *banja* or section shared one *laweni*. This had the effect of dividing them up to some extent on a basis of family and rank, but in a *laweni* serving a whole village all the boys went in together whatever families they came from. There was no respecting of clan status in the *laweni* and young boys of high-ranking families had to wait on and obey older boys of lower rank. *Laweni* life was therefore a democratizing influence among the boys of the village, and no boys were excused from herding cattle because they belonged to a house which owned cattle. Even if some went to school and others did not, the school-boys had to take their share of herding in the holidays. Ngoni chiefs and leading men laid great emphasis on keeping the boys busy and making them carry out the work allotted to them. The older boys began to listen in at court cases and to discuss them among themselves. During the wet season from time to time they formed hoeing parties for clearing new ground and for the periodical weeding of gardens. They seldom did any continuous cultivation, as the women and the older men did, and a boy who liked to go off and hoe by himself was pointed out as one with rather peculiar tastes.

During this period of *laweni* life, when in addition to herding the

[1] For the relation between the training of herd-boys and preparation for war, see Part II, Chap. I, p. 30.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

561 boys took more interest and more part in adult occupations and affairs,
866 the emergence of leadership among Ngoni boys of high-ranking families was watched by their elders and recognized by their age mates. This was the formative period when a boy's capacity to succeed his father in a position of authority was carefully observed and judged. The Ngoni had ways of passing over a man who was a physical weakling, a coward in face of danger, a sadistic bully to weaker men, a pursuer of women and a breaker-up of marriages. The *madoda* in a Ngoni village, who appeared to let the boys in the *laweni* manage their own affairs without interfering, had nevertheless a shrewd idea of who was making good and who was proving disappointing. Their comments, showing continued observation over a long period, were often expressed when two or three friends and age mates from the *laweni* decided to go off to the south to work together. The *madoda* would then say: 'We hope they will come back soon and not be "lost". So and so is like his father and he will help us here in the village'; or they might comment: 'Good riddance, they were always hanging round the girls—worthless ones, indeed' (*wa chabe ndithu*).

881 It has already been pointed out that there was no circumcision school
856 nor public initiation rite among the Ngoni. At puberty the ritual observed was a private and personal affair. On a boy's first nocturnal emission his age mates informed an older boy in the *laweni*, who told him to go at once before it was light and bathe in the river, and to do so
[823 each morning after an emission. This use of cold water was believed to
827] give a boy strength and virility. The boy was also instructed by the older boys in the *laweni* on how to behave to his equals and his elders and to women. This stage was called *ukuchayiwa nga' manzi*, 'to be beaten with water', and was not reported to the older people. When the older people noticed that the boy's voice was breaking, his father inquired whether he had passed puberty and, on being assured of this, he found a man who knew the *uludengele* medicine. The father killed a goat, and the medicine man took some of the unchewed cud from the goat's stomach, mixed it with the bitter *uludengele* root and put it on a pan over a fire. This took place near the gate of the kraal or near the parents' hut, with the father and the father's male relatives standing by. When the mixture boiled, the boy was told to dip the tips of his fingers in the pan one after the other and lick each one quickly. At the same time he kept jumping over the fire and striking his elbows against his sides. The Ngoni believed that this medicine gave boys physical strength and stamina and they administered it to their servants' sons as well. It was still practised in the 1930's among Ngoni who were educated and partly westernized.

867 While the organization of the *laweni* catered for all boys from their
881 second teeth till their marriage, including boys from the age sets called *abantwana* and *amajaha*, the organization of girls' life followed a

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

different pattern. They also went to sleep with a grandmother or some other older member of the family when they were old enough to be excluded from their mother's hut at night, and they shared with their small brothers the grandmother's care and her story-telling round the fire in the evenings. During the day the girls continued as part of their mother's household group, eating with her and the younger children. As little girls they were taught to sit down carefully and to smooth down the cloth which they wore round their waists. They were trained to speak correctly and to know the right forms of address, to greet strangers politely, to avoid touching their father's mats or bed, to eat tidily and with restraint. The emphasis was on exclusiveness for these high-born Ngoni girls, lest, as a result of mixing too freely with everyone, they should forget the teaching given and the behaviour which was expected of them. In contrast to their brothers' rigorous training in the *laweni*, Ngoni girls, as they showed signs of approaching puberty, were guarded and looked after and instructed further in correct behaviour.

When a girl found that she was menstruating for the first time, she told one of her age mates and sent her to tell her *gogo*.[1] The *gogo* told her to stay in the hut during the period and showed her how to wear a cloth between her legs, which she had henceforth to wear always whether menstruating or not. She was told to sleep from now on in a different part of the hut from the smaller children and never to bathe with younger girls. At the end of her first period the girl was escorted to the women's bathing-place by her father's sisters and other female members of her father's family. She was made to wash in the stream and squat in the cold water while doing so. I saw more than one child trying to control her shivering while her relatives watched to see if she would be strong and brave, or weak and cowardly. When she was in the water she was made to face south-east—the quarter which the Ngoni called *kwathu* (our home). After this ceremony the girl's father and mother were informed, and her father informed the head of his *banja* and the head of the village. The news was greeted with rejoicing and made generally public.

From about the age of ten or eleven, the Ngoni girl belonged to an age set distinguished by a separate name. She was no longer included in the group of children, as were her brothers of the same age, but was marked out by belonging to the age set called *inkakazana* or *mabuthu*. After her first menstruation she belonged to the age set called *izintombi* or *anamwali*. From this stage, Ngoni girls were under the close supervision of the older women. The association of a *gogo* or older woman with each house in a Ngoni village meant that the girls of the house were under her special care, particularly after they had passed puberty. There

[1] *gogo* in this context is used for grandmother or for the elderly woman to whose care the girl was assigned.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

emphasized this, and was a reminder of their careful bringing up in their father's village surrounded by their attendant girls and older women.

Many of the *umsindo* songs referred to well-known events in Ngoni history. Others were warnings against jealousy when living in a polygynous household. One of these, said to be a lament of the women about the difficulties of polygynous households, was very popular in the northern kingdom and was used by Ngoni ministers in the churches when speaking against polygamy, even though the actual words of the song seemed to be referring to a historical event.

The boys and girls went through one common ceremony about the age of seven, when their second teeth were coming. The local tribes practised various forms of scarification, including facial tribal markings. The Ngoni never did this in the past and said that they despised it. Their distinctive marking was the piercing of the ear lobes in order to insert a small piece of reed, or a stud, or some beads. Formerly, when captives were taken in war, or when a village was conquered and annexed, the local people, especially the younger men, were forced to have their ears pierced as a condition of service in the regiments. After the Europeans came, the forcible ear-piercing was resisted by the local tribes, but among the Ngoni, especially those of trans-Zambesi clans, it continued to be practised, and I saw it being carried out in several villages. It was done in the dry cold-weather months, usually by one of the senior women of the children's family or house, and included all the children of about the same age who wanted to have their ears pierced. The woman pierced the lobe with a thorn, or a needle if she had one, and threaded some cotton through the hole. A day or so later they put in tiny bits of grass and replaced these with larger and larger bits until the hole was considered the right size.

After this ear-piercing ceremony, the boys' and girls' groups developed on their separate lines until their members became interested in each other as members of the opposite sex. Then, as I said at the beginning of the chapter, the groups of youths and girls were the two most prominent age groups in a village. They paid great attention to their clothes, washed with sweet-smelling leaves, used fats to anoint their hair, and the girls wore bead ornaments in their hair and on neck and wrists. Thus adorned, they spent their leisure time, especially in the cold weather after harvest, visiting other villages, usually in separate groups of youths and girls, except when they went as a team to dance *ngoma* in a neighbouring village.

In the social life of young people in Ngoni villages, the *ngoma* dance played an important part, especially in the northern kingdom. It took place after the harvest and was organized on a 'village team' basis. The boys practised their dance outside the cattle kraal in the evenings, and the girls did their dancing by themselves as a rule. But on the occasion

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

of an *ngoma* 'competition' the team was made up of lads and girls of about fourteen to eighteen years old. They went off to another village, having announced their arrival previously, and challenged the 'home team' to dance *ngoma*. The dancing was in the kraal with the adults looking on and acting as judges. It was all very decorous and orderly and the competing teams were in dead earnest. As we have noticed already, the Ngoni danced without drums. The steady beat of the feet of the young men made the rhythm for the dance, but the co-ordination in the long lines of boys in front and girls behind needed assiduous practice to produce harmonious results. In both northern and central Ngoniland the Paramounts had forbidden all dances except Ngoni dances, and in the north the *ngoma* was encouraged by the chiefs because it was considered a 'good dance' for young people.

After marriage, the young women were absorbed in the care of their huts and young children and only appeared as an age set when they took part in a communal hoeing; on such occasions they were inclined to keep apart from the older women, sometimes on the grounds that they did not drink the full-strength beer, and therefore clustered round a pot of 'sweet' beer when they knocked off work. In most Ngoni villages the young men after marriage went off to find work and, as a group of friends within an age set, they would get together to talk things over, make their preparations and travel to the south.

In day-to-day village affairs, as well as on ceremonial occasions, the age sets of the *manina* and *madoda* were very much in evidence. The *madoda* met at meal-times by the gate of the kraal, and they went there to count the cattle when they came back in the evening. The same group could be seen either at the kraal gate or on a verandah talking about village affairs or drinking together, or at a court listening to cases. The *manina* usually gathered in the verandah of the *indlunkulu* to talk over women's affairs or to receive guests. As an age set they met less frequently than the men because the larger part of their tasks lay in their own huts or in the group of women associated with a house. On all occasions when the formal reception of strangers took place, or when ritual feasting or shaving or washing occurred, or when important decisions had to be made, the *manina* and the *madoda* in their separate sets were in evidence.

Although the age sets in village life were social units carrying definite responsibilities and performing recognized activities, their chief importance in Ngoni social life was in regulating behavioural patterns and prescribing mutual relationships. Here we have to take note of a selective principle at work among the *manina* and *madoda*. Although in one sense all women and men of forty to forty-five and upwards belonged to these age sets, the individuals who carried out the characteristic activities of these groups did not include all the men and women of that age. The very old people did not continue to exercise any influence in village

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

561 888 affairs unless they were exceptionally vigorous mentally and physically, or the kind of dominating personality who could not be overlooked. It was evident also that individuals of weak character or evil disposition were not included in the group. I saw one or two such persons who bore a bad reputation in village society turned away from a senior group which was talking over a difficult village affair, with the caustic comment: 'Who is that worthless one? We cannot know him.' On the other hand, on social occasions when food or beer was being dispensed, all the old ones and the less reputable ones would be given their share, though sometimes with a cutting remark about the people who never missed a party but never did any work.

Selection in the senior age sets was intended to show that only persons who could be trusted, that is who were of known good character, were qualified to supervise the growing up of boys and girls, for whom the village elders as a group felt responsible. The maintenance of Ngoni standards of behaviour in young people was in the hands of this older group, who could and did exercise authority over and above that of the family and house. There were no more ardent supporters of Ngoni behaviour patterns than some of the older men and women of Ntumba clans in the central kingdom who had been brought up in the houses of Swazi or trans-Zambesi clans, and were recognized as *manina* and *madoda* in their villages.

561 576 Among the younger people below the group of elders, it was common to hear them address each other as *ntanga yami*, or *mnzanga*, 'my age mate'. Boys shouted it at each other on the cattle ground, young women called to each other in those terms when pounding maize, and when on a visit as an *ngoma* dance team it was a frequent form of address among the youths and girls. There was inherent in that form of address an ease of relationship, an absence of seniority or inferiority, and an acknowledgement of a tie which went beyond that of the family or house or clan. It was most commonly used within a village, but it was sometimes used between young people of different villages.

561 572 Within these groups of youths and girls and among young married men and women, there was a recognized friendship relation, *cibwenzi*, which existed as a rule between pairs of individuals of the same sex and age. It was sometimes a continuation of a playmate companionship; sometimes an expression of the need of a young boy in a *laweni* or a young married woman for a confidante or sympathizer. Most often it was a spontaneous specialized liking for another person, expressed invariably through an exchange of small gifts and generally of confidences, and often by going off together to bathe or cut firewood or catapult small birds. Such friendships were said as a rule to be permanent, though girls and women sometimes referred contemptuously to someone as 'She was my friend. Now she hates me and does not give me anything.' The decision to go off in search of work was often taken

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

561
572

by two youths who were friends and who announced their intention, and then were joined by other pairs.

561
178

These forms of an age-set system which the Ngoni brought with them from the south were still in the 1930's a significant element in village life. The greatest change had occurred in the cessation of warfare and, with the enforcement of peace, the recognized stages mentioned in the beginning of this chapter had to a large extent disappeared. Though the boys and men were no longer divided into pre-warriors, warriors, and post-warriors, the institution of the *laweni* and the important role played by the *madoda* were two distinctive elements in Ngoni village life. So also was the form and content of the training given to Ngoni girls of Swazi clans, which largely determined the role played by the *manina* in village affairs.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

on was placed on it. The meat in the basket and on the gate stayed there all night.

Following the ritual of offering meat to the spirits came the ritual of cooking and eating the meat, both that offered to the spirits and the rest. After the basket of meat had been left all night in the place of the spirits, the large quantity on the gate was carried away and cooked by an old woman outside the hut of Bambo Manga's granddaughter. The meat in the basket which had been offered to the spirits was put in a pot and cooked on the fire in Bambo Manga's hut. It stayed cooking all day and all night till the following morning. Dzinthenga Phungwako, an old and highly respected *lidoda*, came to the hut and divided the sacrificial meat among all who were in the house, that is Bambo Manga, her daughter and granddaughter and several senior women. When they had finished the leading women stood up and thanked '*Zikhomo Maleko*', '*Zikhomo Magwagwa*'. Then they washed their hands and went to their own houses.

The large quantity of meat which had been laid on the gate and cooked on another fire in another *bwalo* was carried in a big pot and put down outside Bambo Manga's hut in the late afternoon. Her daughter came outside and divided the meat into three piles: a small one from the breast-bones for the women, a leg for the chief, the head for Kabwazi the headman of a neighbouring village, and the rest in a big pot for the men. A boy came to tell Lopati that all was ready and he and the chief went out to the place where the beast was killed, near the gate of the kraal. There were four groups already sitting there and the chief and Lopati made a fifth: the *madoda*, the senior men; the *majaha*, the young men; the *mabusa*, the herd-boys; and the little boys. Before Lopati divided the meat he and the chief washed elaborately with water brought in a gourd, and then he washed the knife before cutting the meat. He called the *madoda* to send someone for their portion in a basket, then the young men and the herd-boys were given their portions—a basket for each group, and the small boys had bits put in their hands. The eating was very sedate, there was no snatching of choice bits, and in each group the one who fetched the meat distributed it. There was the general atmosphere of a ritual meal rather than a feast, though the small boys smacked their lips appreciatively. From time to time Lopati called up someone from a group and gave him a bit more to divide up. When it was all eaten, a boy was sent to fetch water and the soapy leaves which the Ngoni used for washing, and the chief and Lopati and the *madoda* all washed the grease off their fingers. Then Lopati stood up and called out '*Siyadumisa baba, zikhomo mntwana wenkosi*', 'We are praising you, father, thank you child of the Paramount', and the others all agreed and said '*Zikhomo baba.*' Then they all went together to Bambo Manga's hut and stood opposite her door and called out the same thanks. The women who had eaten their meat

in three age groups on the verandah also came forward and, led by NaNkoloma, a widow of Njolomole I, thanked in the women's language, '*Zimata, zaithwa mntwana twenkosi.*'

I did not witness any ritual sacrifices in the northern kingdom but the accounts given me by informants corresponded closely with the ritual in Mcakhatha just described. When sacrificing for rain to the spirits of the Paramount, a black ox with no white spot was driven into the kraal in the late afternoon and the chosen spokesman addressed the ancestral spirits of the Jere clan telling them that this was their beast, they must eat the meat and tell UMkulumqango that the people needed rain. While this man prayed to the spirits he stood facing the beast, and everyone else sat looking in front of them and keeping very quiet. The women stayed at home in their huts and the Paramount stayed in his hut 'as if mourning'. When the beast urinated and showed that the spirits had heard, a messenger came and informed the Paramount. The beast was killed early the next morning in the kraal. While the flaying took place, all the huts of the chief wives were smeared with dried cow-dung on the floors and on the smooth place outside the doors. The meat, in two parts, was taken into the *indlunkulu* and left there all night at the back, so that the spirits might lick it. The next morning the meat was cooked in the kraal by the *madoda* and when it was ready they reported to the big *induna*. He called all the people into the kraal and divided them into companies according to their sections and head villages. The meat was given to the head of each head village who divided it among his group. When everyone had finished, one of the leading men stood up and began to praise the spirit using his titles and praise-names (*izitokozo*). The rest stood up and shouted *Bayete*. They then began to dance a war-dance but, the informants added, that was soon stopped by torrents of rain.

These chapters on the Ngoni ancestor cult bring to an end this study of the two Ngoni kingdoms in Nyasaland in the 1930's. We have seen how their distinctiveness as a people depended on the culture which they brought with them from the south and how this culture was found among the families of the Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans. In the topics included in the three sections of this book: the political system, the social organization, and the ancestor cult, the main features of Ngoni culture are most clearly seen. In much of their economic and agricultural life there was little to distinguish them from their neighbours among the other Nyasaland peoples. The changes brought about by the missions, the schools, new forms of local government, and new types of occupation, were all tending to make the Ngoni less distinctive as a people. The conversion of some leading Ngoni to Christianity, as suggested in Chapter V of Part II, and the spread of schools were together the most powerful influences in altering Ngoni traditional culture. The

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

Africa. All males had to pay taxes to the government, at first in kind and later in cash, thus hastening the advent of a money economy. Most drastic of all the changes was the ban on warfare, which cut at the roots of Ngoni political organization, and at their system of training their young men.

In the Northern Ngoni kingdom, the Scottish Mission preceded the administration by more than twenty years, and were largely responsible for a peaceful take-over of the area. In the Central kingdom there was a brief war of resistance, in which the Ngoni armies were dispersed and the Paramount killed on his way to trial. In this area mission activity, under several missions, never achieved, especially in education, the ascendancy which the Scottish Mission achieved among the Ngoni in the North.

As one result of the cessation of warfare, and of school education leading to paid employment, there was an economic redistribution of wealth among the Ngoni. Formerly wealth had been associated with political power, and the Paramounts and their subordinate chiefs and heads of clans had command of large herds of cattle, received the spoils from wars and raids, and used the labour of conquered villages to cultivate the land. After the missions and government were established, men with schooling began to earn money as teachers, clerks and mechanics, and so to command financial resources which were not available to the traditional leaders. The young men responded to the labour recruitment which became a permanent feature in Nyasaland from the 1890s, and they went far afield to many types of work.

It was evident, just before World War II, that the Ngoni kingdoms had had a profound shock from which they never fully recovered, in spite of the recognition of their Paramount Chiefs by the Native Authorities Ordinance in 1934. The older men looked back with nostalgia to what they called 'the time of peace, when the Europeans were not here to trouble us'. These older men were known as 'the generation of former days', because they had taken part in warfare

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

as young men, and had known the independence and supremacy of the Ngoni kingdoms. The expression 'everything is finished now' was often on their lips, especially when faced by new demands from the government, or by rebellious attitudes from their former subject peoples.

'The middle generation' was the term applied to the men who had as children known the Ngoni kingdoms in their prime. Though they had never fought as warriors nor been enrolled in an age-regiment, some of them had gone to the wars as young boys, carrying the gear for their older brothers. Many of these men, especially in the North, came under the influence of the missions, and became teachers, clerks, ministers and hospital assistants, married Christian wives and brought up their children in Christian, but Ngoni Christian, families. These men never lost their attachment to the Ngoni way of living, and many of them had made a successful synthesis of the old and the new ways. They stood, as they said, 'between' the generations, for they knew and understood both sides of an immensely different way of living and standard of values. Their children were 'the generation of today', who had no personal experience of past Ngoni ascendancy, and who took mission schooling and working for wages as a normal feature of their life.

When I lived in Ngoni villages, such as those described briefly in this chapter, Ngoni values and attitudes dominated social relationships. There was a determined struggle on the part of all responsible for child training to inculcate these Ngoni ideas and ways of living. The senior men and women were aware of the constant and increasing infiltration into their way of living of ideas, attitudes and behaviour coming from other ethnic groups in their midst. In addition their culture was being undermined by European influences in the schools, in the money economy, and from modern political developments, emphasizing an all-Nyasaland sentiment rather than loyalties based on ethnic grouping. Ngoni pride of race, and a consciousness that they had a

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

choice and variety of food, was primarily to please him, and 593
to meet the incessant claims on his hospitality when visitors 592
came. A well-ordered and harmonious household also pleased
him, and conversely the sounds of women quarrelling an- [183]
gered him and violated his canons of accepted Ngoni be-
haviour. It was his wife's task to supervise the household 357
helpers, who were mostly non-Ngoni, and to make them 592
conform to Ngoni patterns by controlling their rages, instead
of yelling at each other and hurling accusations of witchcraft
at those with whom they were angry.

Ngoni women also took a serious view of another aspect of 562
pleasing their husbands, namely attention to their person and 593
dress. The old elaborate hair-dressing of Ngoni women, the 302
scrupulous washing of their bodies with sweet-smelling leaves, 515
the use of oil and clarified butter on the skin and hair, and 901
the careful tying and draping of cloths and arranging of
bead headbands and necklaces—these all were forms of
beauty treatment and personal hygiene designed to please
the husband. They also reinforced the self-respect and author- [565]
ity of well-born Ngoni women, marking them out by their
well-groomed appearance from the 'workers' and 'helpers'
who surrounded them.

The young Ngoni child, up to the age of six or seven, grew 602
up in a women's world of the kind just described. His mother 855
was learning from his paternal grandmother the increasing [606]
duties and responsibilities of an Ngoni wife, although she
was supposed to have learned some of them in her own home
from her mother before marriage. We saw in Chapter II how
the social horizons of a small Ngoni child were never of a
narrow type, restricted to his individual family. The care of
a child, especially between the time of weaning and the
coming of second teeth, was the concern of a number of
women in addition to his own mother, from whom he was
snatched away at weaning, and, for a time at least, kept
away from her household for eating and sleeping.

Among the female population of a village most nearly [561]●

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

561 related to a young child by kinship, there were three distinct
855 age-groups. Nearest in age to him were his older sisters,
602 children of his own mother, of his father's other wives, and of his father's brothers' wives. When he began to talk he
[601] addressed all these as 'sister', or rather as 'my sister', and they took a kindly interest in him, especially if he were a boy and therefore to be removed from them when the time came for him to live in the boys' dormitory. They played with him, they sometimes carried him about while the nurse girl
[262] did something else, they ground bulrush millet or roasted ground-nuts to give him as snacks. They were particularly
[868] concerned with teaching him to speak correctly, to say the right names for things, to use the correct terms for older
[533] people, and later to sing the refrains of little songs in their singing games.

Above this sister group in age came his own mother and his other 'mothers', who were his father's other wives and his father's brothers' wives. All of them he was taught to
[601] address as 'my mother'. His father's sisters on the other hand, who took a special interest in his upbringing, he addressed as 'woman father', and the name implied some
[554] measure of the authority which his father and his father's brothers exercised in the household and in the village.

Above this generation of mothers and woman-fathers came the grandmothers. Pre-eminent in supervising his life
[601] and the care taken of him was his father's own mother, but he also addressed as 'grandmother' his grandfather's other wives and his grandfather's brothers' wives.

561 The same triple grouping by age and generation, which
357 the child learned by degrees to distinguish among his own kin, was repeated among the 'helpers' in his mother's and grandmother's households. There were young children who were the children of the household staff. His nurse girl and her fellow nurse girls formed a slightly senior group in this division, both by reason of their responsibilities as well as of their age. Above them, as the next generation, were the

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

women helpers of his mother's age, one or two of whom had come with her at her marriage to attend her, and who themselves had married in her new village. Above them again were the older women helpers of his grandmother's generation, themselves grandmothers, whom he addressed as 'grandmother', as he did his own grandparents.

There were other sets of people whom the young child saw less often. When he visited his mother's relatives in her old home, he enjoyed all the allurement a child feels for living in a different place among people who want to gratify his every wish. Sometimes the maternal relatives visited the child's home, but then their relationship with him was on more formal terms. They did not dare for example to give him titbits in private, or to pet him, or even to correct him, lest his father's relatives might notice and remind them: 'This is *our* child.'

Other strangers came and went all the time, and the child learned to distinguish between the village inhabitants and those he, and others, designated as 'strangers'. He saw mostly the women who were entertained in the compound of his grandmother. He was sometimes taken by his mother when she went to greet strangers by the big house, and he learned early that he was not expected to make a noise or call attention to himself in the presence of these strangers.

In this women's world the higher age-group in each status group, that is of relatives and helpers, carried the chief authority, gave orders, and rebuked all below them for breaches of etiquette or failure to carry out commands. For the small child, the whole superstructure of authority in the women's world built round his daily life a sense of security, partly because it was so ordered and so little variable. When the Ngoni said, 'A child belongs to all the village. They can all cherish him and correct him,' they really meant this women's world, organized through the households and the families and the houses. The child's needs for food and sleep, washing and warmth, care when sick, were taken care of

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

Young Ngoni children among their siblings and age-mates

593 855 The hard-worked theme of sibling rivalry among small children in a family was not obvious among young Ngoni children. I expected to see outbursts of jealousy when the ex-baby returned after weaning to his mother's compound and found another baby installed there. But even with the new baby present, the mother seemed to have time to pet the ex-baby, telling the nurse girl to leave him with her, and there were few overt signs of emotional tension. This was certainly due to a large extent to the nurse-girl pattern, the fenced compound which was the child's home, and the interest of older sisters in their younger brothers and sisters. Young children growing up, as we have seen, were the focus of attention for a group of girls and women of different ages. They were hardly ever in a situation in which they had to struggle to assert themselves against a sibling, or, in their early years, against their age-mates. If they felt slighted or miserable or hungry or tired they could always go to someone to be petted or fed.

Hence their emotional needs for affection and attention never seemed to be unsatisfied. They were accustomed to having their physical needs supplied by any one of several women, and did not depend only on their mother for these needs. Nurse girls and older sisters were often demonstrative to small children, and they got more actual petting from them than from their mother or grandmother. Young children in turn often petted one smaller than themselves, or a new baby, and there was a contented affectionate relationship between children in the home which indicated the absence of any acute sibling rivalry.

857 ●561 From about the age of five or six, boys, who were escaping from the restrictions and security of the compound to the freedom and competition of village life, found a new challenge in a large group of their own age-mates, also just coming out of the younger child seclusion of the home. Boys

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

of this age, escaping from the women, showed their independence in their choice of games and occupations, many of which, as we have seen, were of an individual nature. They were not much inclined to join together as an age-group except for occasional gang enterprises. If one boy interfered with another's game of tops or took away his axe or hoop, there was an immediate short sharp fight. The defeated one either ran home to be comforted, with the jeers of the victor in his ears, or he stood and sulked for a moment, and then went on with his pursuit. It was outside in the open village spaces and not behind the fences of the compounds that small boys learned to put up with each other, to meet aggression and to be aggresive in turn, and then suddenly to gang up with a group and play happily together. 857 561

The test for boys of correct Ngoni training in the childhood stage, between weaning and second teeth, was their ability to get on with their age-mates and fellow villagers when they went to live in the dormitory. One boy went to live for long periods with his maternal grandmother in his mother's home village, after an argument in which for once his father was overruled by his wife and her family. This boy was indulged and spoiled by his maternal relatives who were afraid to correct him and to discipline him because he was the child of their son-in-law. The result was that when the boy came back about the age of seven, on his father's insisting that he should take part in herding and live in the dormitory, he was selfish, rude and disobedient, and failed to fit in with the other boys. This and similar stories were often quoted to show the importance of the father's family being in sole control during the early stages of childhood. 858 867

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

521 867 men's affairs. The kind of topics discussed by men at the kraal gate included hunting, in the right season; cases heard in the courts and the application of Ngoni law to all subjects of the Ngoni chiefs; the organization of village affairs from tax collecting and dealing with tax evaders to beer drinks and burials and building houses; the sales of cotton, tobacco and cattle at near-by markets and the current prices; the various labour recruiters combing the villages for likely young men and the latest stories brought back by men who had returned from working in the south. Every now and then, particularly when the talk ranged round decisions in the courts or adding to the herds of cattle, references were made to the Ngoni past, to their relations with Europeans, both missionaries and officials, and to the behaviour of the non-Ngoni groups in the Ngoni kingdoms. The older boys listened attentively and as we shall see later in Chapter VII acquired among other things an extensive knowledge about the needs and uses of cattle. The younger ones pricked up their ears now and then when a familiar name or event was mentioned, and stored up questions to ask their father at a time when he was willing to listen and answer.

576 417 There was the usual Ngoni formality about where people sat at the kraal gate. The most senior men sat on each side of the opening, leaning up against the gate-posts, with the rest in decreasing order of rank as they were farther from the gate. The cleared space on each side of the gate and in front of it was all known as the 'gate of the kraal'. The craftsmen [469] who were carving wood or twisting bark rope, making baskets or plaiting mats, sat according to their age and rank on the edges of the senior group or among them. They could have carried on their trade anywhere, but they preferred the company of their fellows and did not want to miss listening to the talk or the arrival of strangers. The herd-boys, when 858 they were present, were on the extreme edges of those sitting [561] there, divided into two groups, 'youths' and boys. Each [262] group made its own fire for boiling milk and roasting sweet potatoes or ground-nuts.596

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

VILLAGE LIFE FOR OLDER BROTHERS AND SISTERS

The youngest boys were not expected to herd cattle until they were ten or eleven years old. Their work was to look after the calves, sheep and goats, sometimes following the cattle to the grazing ground, sometimes wandering round the edge of the village, avoiding the cultivated areas until after harvest. At that time cattle, calves, sheep and goats were driven into the stubble and left to forage.

As a result of dormitory life, combined with cattle-herding, a definite ideal herd-boy personality developed. This was fostered by the hero-worship of the older herd-boys by the young ones. It was also built up by the praise or blame meted out for herding well or badly by the older herd-boys to younger ones, and by the cattle-owners. This 'ideal herdsman' was used by Ngoni ministers and teachers living in the villages to relate their teaching about Christianity to the life around them. Prayers near the kraal, conducted by an Ngoni minister each evening, or before people went on a journey, often began with the words 'Jesus our shepherd, keep us well'. Young teachers often said to me how they always listened as boys when a prayer began like this, and that in school their favourite Bible story was that of David the herd-boy.

When there was a school in the village or near by which the Ngoni elders approved of, the herd-boys had a busy life. They watered the cattle very early, took them to graze and milked them. Then they went to school from ten to two, taking the cattle out grazing afterwards. In the cold weather they went to school from six to ten and herded cattle the rest of the day, after the sun had dried the dew off the grass. School attendance depended on the attitude of fathers to the new learning, and how the village elders regarded the local mission and its teachers. The boys whose fathers had no cattle, in general the non-Ngoni elements in the village, were free to attend school continuously since they had no herding responsibilities. There was some jeering among the boys in the dormitory at those who only went to school and did not

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

872 go herding. School was sometimes regarded as an easy option where you sat still all day and repeated things after the
[875] teacher. This was far from being the case in a village like Enkodlweni where the headmaster was well trained and kept the boys on their toes. In such schools the boys themselves were enthusiastic about learning, and regarded going to school as a dignified and worth-while occupation, and not a childish amusement.

Girls' life in the village

858 When the girls had their second teeth and were acknowledged to have reached the new stage in their development, there was no abrupt transition for them, as for their brothers, from the household circle to the dormitory, or from the women's world to the men's world. They continued as part of the women's world; they changed their occupations and their daily routine on the whole very little; and they went on sleeping in the hut of a widowed aunt or grandmother. All that was said however in the earlier part of the chapter about accountability for their behaviour was as true as for the boys.

561 The Ngoni girls of leading families formed a distinct group,
[565] called in the age-set terms 'children' until they were about eleven and then 'immature girls' until they reached puberty. There was in Ngoni thought and practice a clear division between immature and mature girls, and we shall see what this involved in girls' life in Chapters VI and VII. The age-set terms used to distinguish between children and immature girls did not imply any real differences in ways of living, manners and occupations. The girls between about seven and fourteen were looked on as belonging to a 'girls' circle', and this girls' circle had certain distinctive features.

561 In the first place the tendency of the girls to draw apart
562 from the boys of their own age, already evident before the
535 coming of the second teeth, was now more or less complete
628 with the boys' withdrawal into dormitory life and their preoccupation with herding. Later, about the age of twelve

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

or thirteen, the girls began to take part in *ngoma* dances with the boys. This was on a village basis and organized with a view to competition with other villages. In practising such dancing, as we shall see later, the girls were often by themselves, though when getting ready for a competition they joined with the boys' group.

The Ngoni girls' circle was to some extent split into the households to which the girls belonged. There was no common residence or common eating-place for all the group, to correspond with the boys' dormitory and eating together at the kraal gate. Generally the girls continued to eat in their mothers' compound with their own younger brothers and sisters. They sometimes ate with the widowed aunt or grandmother with whom they slept, but the other practice was more common. This meant that Ngoni girls who bore the clan name of their father continued to live in the compound of their mother who might not be of a high-ranking Ngoni clan. In such cases the grandmother and the father's elder sister kept a sharp eye on the training and deportment of the girl.

The Ngoni girls' circle was an exclusive group. Unlike the dormitory where all village boys mixed up, the Ngoni girls, in virtue of bearing their father's clan name, tended to remain as a distinctive group. They were members of their father's house until they married; and when that took place it was they who could cause cattle to flow into the herd belonging to that house. It was partly for this reason, the transfer of cattle, that the Ngoni women of that house, particularly the grandmother, watched closely the bringing up of the girls from the second teeth stage onward. If she thought the training of the girl was unsatisfactory, because of the carelessness or doubtful character of the girl's own mother, the grandmother might discuss with the girl's father the advisability of arranging for the girl to be adopted into another household or into a collateral house. The reason for this was that when marriage negotiations began and the prospective parents-in-law made inquiries about the girl's character and

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

upbringing, they would be unwilling to consider an alliance if the girl's mother were known to be a doubtful character or a careless housewife. The girl's prospects in marriage depended not only on her own reputation and character, but on the household milieu in which she was known to have grown up.

The Ngoni girls in this circle were not only an exclusive group. They were a carefully guarded and protected one. The surveillance of the grandmother, as the woman head of the girl's father's house, was dominant. Besides watching to see if the girl's home was proving a satisfactory training ground, she chose a 'companion' or 'attendant' for the girl, to take the place of the nurse girl. She was a little older than the Ngoni girl, but near enough in age to enjoy and enter into all her occupations and amusements. This companion, chosen from among the helpers in the grandmother's household, grew up with the Ngoni girl, waited on her to some extent, went everywhere with her, slept in the same hut and ate in the same household.

In her daily life in the village an Ngoni girl had in her circle all those whom she called 'sisters' and their companions. There was one exception to the exclusiveness of this group, and that was the school. Many Ngoni fathers who decided that school was a good thing for their boys, decided that it would also be wise to send their girls to school, especially if they showed signs of exceptional ability and leadership. This was sometimes carried through in the teeth of opposition from the grandmother, but the father usually won the day. For Ngoni girls school was an escape from the relative dullness and monotony of compound life, as also from the continual surveillance which became stricter as they grew older and entered the immature girls' group. The Ngoni girls enjoyed mixing with boys, being taught by men, learning to read and write, hearing Bible stories. The daughters of Ngoni chiefs and heads of leading clans were easily distinguishable in the schools by their controlled and dignified behaviour in class and in the playground. They were not

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

given to giggling and putting their head on one side when asked questions. They took their school work seriously in order to show that they, the Ngoni girls, were the intelligent ones. They were also aware that the number of cattle to be transferred at their marriage would be greater according to whether they finished school in Standard II, III, IV, or even VI.

Apart from going to school, which was only for the daughters of relatively forward-looking Ngoni fathers, the girls continued to take part in the daily routine of the household. They and their companions, according to their growth and strength and pleasure, did a little pounding, fetching water, grinding grain, roasting ground-nuts. In a large household, where there were many helpers, the daughters of the family only did as much as they felt inclined of the domestic chores. As they said: 'It was like our play.' They spent more time with the young children, or washing themselves and their clothes by the stream. Combing and dressing their hair, rubbing fat or oil on their skin, threading beads, plaiting grass or fibres, learning how to make Ngoni bead designs for head bands or wristlets—all these formed the lighter and more amusing side of the daily routine.

From among the girls in this exclusive and protected girls' circle, Ngoni girls chose a particular friend, whom they always addressed as 'my friend', even if she were a classificatory sister or cousin. As with the boys in the dormitory this friend was a confidante to whom a girl could talk freely about her life in the compound, her likes and dislikes among the other girls and women, her ideas about suitors and marriage. The friend was always from another compound and of a leading Ngoni clan. The two friends made bracelets and necklets for each other, and went to bathe in the stream together. Sometimes the friendship lasted until the girls were married and separated. At times it broke up suddenly in a violent quarrel. There was however a curious tenacity about these friendship pacts, and they were more often maintained

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

behaviour especially to elders, and to enforce by dramatic and sometimes brutal means a submissive attitude towards authority. That objective, as we have seen, was carried out by the Ngoni throughout their training of their children, from the earliest age upwards. They were half amused and half scandalized at the idea that young people had to be put in a camp in the bush in order to teach them how to behave.

Cultural changes in the assumption of adult roles

It is necessary to look back for a moment to the Ngoni past in order to see how changed external conditions in Nyasaland had altered the sequences and the timing of the process by which youths and young girls were recognized as adults. The stages of arriving at social maturity had been speeded up by cultural changes. In the days of warfare the senior herd-boys, from about twenty years of age, were called up at irregular intervals to form a new regiment. From this time they were known as 'young men' or 'youths', and they fought in the tribal wars for five years. In the off-season, during the rains when raids were not carried out, they were called to clear and cultivate the gardens of the Paramount and chiefs, and to help build houses and fence cattle kraals. At approximately the age of twenty-six to twenty-eight they were ordered to take the head-ring, the form of dressing the hair which formerly marked a married Ngoni man, and they were told they could marry and retire from the army. The older Ngoni declared that young men were not allowed to sleep with girls at all until they joined the army. Even then the relationship had to be initiated by the girl expressing her preference for a lover, and then sex relations were limited to partial intercourse. It was at marriage, after having been given the head-ring, that Ngoni youths were called 'men'. They moved out of the dormitory and built a hut for their wives in the area behind the huts belonging to their father's house. The cattle handed over on their marriage to the bride's family were taken from the herd belonging to that house.

177 561 464 The cessation of warfare, the coming of schools and of a money economy, the urge to find wage-earning work and the opportunities offered by the labour recruiters to emigrate —these were a series of events which radically altered the prospects and outlook of young men. The effect of schooling, [871] if taken seriously, and most Ngoni fathers saw that their sons [434] at least attended regularly, was to equip boys of sixteen or [583] seventeen or even younger to go and get wage-earning jobs. This urge to earn money, in addition to meeting demands for taxes, was strengthened because the cattle to be handed over at marriage had now to be bought from other herds, or at least eventually replaced by purchase, instead of, as formerly, being captured in war. The young men therefore felt that [885] earning money was essential, and finding a job was regarded as a sign of manhood in much the same way as joining a regiment had been. After warfare ceased, and taking the headring was given up as a mark of full manhood and mature status, there was no longer any probition on marriage until [582] a certain age had been reached. The limiting factors in the age of marriage became economic ones instead of military and social ones. Young men whose fathers were able to provide the cattle for the marriage transfer, were able to marry from the age of about eighteen upwards, build huts for their wives, escape from living a bachelor existence in the dormitory, and then go off and find work by emigrating, if no [167] wages which they considered adequate were to be earned in the neighbourhood. These young men then could emerge from the group known as 'youths' at any age from eighteen upwards as soon as they married. If they left the village to find work before they married, they left from and returned to the dormitory, and were still known as youths. Their emigration after marriage, usually after the wife was pregnant and they had 'put a child in the hut', presented the picture familiar in areas such as Enkodlweni of villages almost stripped of their young men, and of young wives living alone in their huts among their husband's relations. The practice of

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

returning from work in the south about every two years or so, even if it was only for temporary residence in the village, mitigated, though only to some extent, the social disintegration and upheaval caused by the absence of so many young men.

In pre-European days, girls waited to marry for five to ten years after attaining puberty. For high-born Ngoni girls a further 'pre-marriage' ceremony and ritual took place immediately before marriage. This was after the girl and young man accepted by her as a 'lover' had been courting for some time but before any formal betrothal took place which involved the approach of the two families through intermediaries, and the discussions about the transfer of cattle. The Ngoni said that this pre-marriage rite was the equivalent for the girls of taking the head-ring for the men, because when it was held it was a public declaration that marriage was now possible for the girl, and she was acknowledged as having reached adult, that is married women's, status.

This ceremony began by the senior women of the girl's home sending for her father and saying to him: 'This child is now grown up. She is ready to be prepared to enter the state of adulthood.' One of the Ngoni names for the ceremony meant—'staying in the hut as if fasting'—a ritual practice associated with rain-making by the Paramount, and with taking 'medicines' for strengthening a new Paramount or chief on his accession. The girl, with her companion, spent two or three days in a hut, hidden behind upright mats curved so that no one could see round them. They were naked except for a long soft leather cloak worn over one shoulder and tied under the right arm. During this seclusion they had food brought to them by the senior women of the girl's house. While the girls were hidden away the village women cooked quantities of meat and brewed beer to entertain friends and relatives of the girl's father. During the feasting and drinking the senior women, with the men, danced the special dances and sang the songs associated with this ritual. Some of

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

to establish their hold. The Ngoni elders said the missions did not like it, and alleged that they gave it up for this reason. But they held on to other rituals also not approved by the missions, and it was probably largely due to the fact that there were no longer large herds of cattle to provide lavish feasts. The songs were remembered and sung by the older women when dancing the special dances associated with the ritual, holding in their hands short rods and small rounded shields, and making stiff jerking movements of head and elbows. Such dances as were put on for me were however a relic and not a living tradition. For the Ngoni girl of good family there was no longer any intervening ritual between her private puberty ceremony and the marriage ceremony.

The marriage age of girls, like that of men, was much earlier than formerly, the most usual age being from sixteen upwards. Most of the older women held that this left very little time in which to teach girls all that they were expected to know before being married and leaving their own home and their father's village for good. This was a particular cause of anxiety to the senior women in areas where the young men emigrated soon after marriage, and where the girl had to maintain her own position and reputation among his relatives without his companionship and support.

Young adults in Ngoni society

We have just seen that cultural changes coming from the outside radically altered the traditional pattern of development of Ngoni youths and girls. The net result of these changes was to telescope the period between physical maturity at puberty and full adult status at marriage, to squeeze the former eight to ten years of this intervening period into about two for the girls and four at most for the youths. This shortened period of preparation for full adult life raised a number of problems for the Ngoni elders. They were aware, as was suggested in the beginning of this chapter, that the attainment of physical maturity called for some re-alignment

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

of the emphases in training boys and girls. This was especially the case in the regulation of relations between the sexes, but new emphases were also needed in the knowledge and competence of young adults before setting up their own households. Boys and girls from this stage onwards were in fact in Ngoni culture thought of as young adults. They had passed out of childhood through the physical change at puberty, and though for a year or two that made little difference in their way of living, they were now regarded as in training for what lay ahead of them. For that training the senior members of their father's family still felt responsible and exercised control. But the emphasis in the training given was on what adults should know, how adults should behave, what adults should be able to do. For the rest of this chapter we shall follow up the new emphases in guiding and to some extent controlling relations between the sexes, and in the following chapter the emphases on cultural knowledge and on technical skills.

In the all-important sphere of heterosexual relations, there were certain social controls among the Ngoni which operated in the selection of a mate and in the form of courtship leading to marriage. Prohibited sex relations and prohibited marriages set up a pattern of avoidance between brothers and sisters, between parallel cousins, and between members of the same clan, and in former days the prohibition had extended also to the children of men of the same regiment. In selecting a mate the Ngoni preference was for someone in another village, for someone of an equal ranking or higher clan, and among Christian families for a young man or girl either already baptized or under instruction. This last preference, urged strongly by the missions and by Christian parents, was often difficult to reconcile with the preference for a high-ranking clan connexion. This was illustrated in the case of a young teacher, whose parents were Christians. He found himself being given contrary advice about choosing a wife. His father died, and his grandfather, an ex-

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

the older herd-boys when they were discussing 'cattle problems' in the evening. They took them into the kraal and showed them signs of the cattle not being well from the condition of the skin, udders, hoofs and mouth. The older boys were also called to be present if medicine was given to cattle, either some specific known to the owners, or treatment given by a 'specialist' called in, who might have real skill and knowledge about sick animals or be trying his luck with secret remedies known only to himself. The herd-boys were taught to notice the condition of other cattle than the ones of which they had charge, and to report on them. These might be cattle in other villages, or cattle belonging to their father's house 'boarded out' in another kraal according to Ngoni practice. The older herd-boys went with their father and his brothers to local markets where cattle were bought and sold, and listened to arguments about their condition which could make a difference of several pounds in the price they fetched.

When it had been decided in the village to kill a beast, for eating, or for selling the meat, or for a sacrifice, it was usually a young adult who was called to spear the animal. Some young men became adept at planting the spear behind the left shoulder in such a way that the beast dropped dead at once. At times two or more stabs were necessary, but it was a matter of pride and no small skill to succeed the first time. The senior herd-boys, who had driven the animal out of the kraal after separating it from its fellows, stood close round and watched attentively, for the stab had to be both accurate and forceful. The reputation of being skilful at killing a beast, of being a 'one stab' man, was greatly desired by herd-boys. They coveted equally the reputation of being skilful at flaying the beast. With carefully sharpened knives, in a few quick deft strokes, the young men slit the skin, opened it up and began to cut up the carcase. Like assistants at a surgical operation, the senior herd-boys held the knives, lifted a limb, turned back the skin, collected the blood, removed the

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

231 severed portions. On branches of fresh leaves, brought by the
● 561 younger herd-boys, were piled the sections of the animal, down to the last bit of intestine, for distribution according to a fixed Ngoni pattern.

231 A senior man of the house owning the beast, when all was
825 ready, 'counted' all the parts, that is he named each part, head, horns, tail, feet, joints and internal organs, and each was pointed out to him as being present. The herd-boys stand-
[868] ing round learned the names of the organs and the sections of the animal, and heard the names and status of the men to whom the parts were assigned. The herd-boys of the family of the owner were given certain symbolic parts: an ear, an eye and the nose, for hearing, seeing and smelling; parts of an artery and of an intestine as controlling the blood flow and the waste material, and the rectum as ejecting waste; and the foot for walking steadily and fast.

Some of the meat was roasted over a fire, parts like the
252 stomach and intestines were cleaned and boiled, some was
[251] dried slowly on a rack over a fire of green wood, and put in fibre bags for keeping. The blood was taken to the head woman of the house owning the herd. She cooked it with the fat round the kidneys till it coagulated and formed a dish, salty and meaty, much liked by the Ngoni, and rather akin to black pudding. The women also took over any spare fat and rendered it down and clarified it to use as
[278] unguents.

233 The young adult who had had six or seven years of
868 herding cattle and had advanced to be a senior herd-boy, had acquired not only certain manual skills such as those just described, but also some knowledge of the anatomy of cattle, some idea of the social attitudes towards cattle and their ownership, and some idea of their economic value to the Ngoni. For certain restricted ritual purposes, a cow in calf had to be killed for sacrifice, and herd-boys saw the foetus removed when the cow was cut up. They were also often present at the birth of calves in the bush, and had to wait

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER

When the Ngoni talked about the separate ideal personalities of men and women, they emphasized the training needed for younger men, and to some extent also for younger women. Senior men and women were expected to possess special qualities due to their age and status and experience. It was recognized that the limited responsibilities of young men before marriage gave them little authority in village and family affairs. Since each family however was bringing up its girls to leave them on marriage and to take the good name of the family elsewhere, there was less distinction made between the qualities desired in younger married women and older ones than there was between the two groups of men.

The ideal personality of Ngoni women

This had four main aspects: physical capacity and appearance, relationship to her husband and his relatives, competence in household management, and general reputation for justice and wisdom.

We talked in Chapter III about the connexion in Ngoni thinking between women being healthy and strong and being able to bear healthy children. In the marriage negotiations and even at the final ceremony itself in the bridegroom's village, there were formalized standard questions put by the bridegroom's representatives about the health of the girl and her family, and these were replied to also in conventional phrases. Such inquiries about health had been made secretly long before the final ceremony, and indeed before any formal approaches had been made which led to the betrothal. But the fact that they were made in public on two distinct occasions, at the preliminary visit of the man's representatives and at the marriage itself, underlined the importance of health and its relation to child-bearing capacity in the ideal Ngoni woman.

We saw in the last chapter that physical strength for continuous hard manual work in the household and in the

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

wife. We have talked in Chapters IV and VII of her duties in organizing food supplies, supervising cooking, and that supreme test of competence: dividing out the food so that all had a fair share. The same high standard of skill was expected in the general care and supervision of the compound, the children and the household staff. Ngoni women, like their menfolk, were proud of being able to supervise other people and organize life around them, to control others satisfactorily, to hear complaints and to pacify quarrels. The proverb 'The tooth laughs to no purpose', meaning that angry people show their teeth but with no merriment, was often heard when Ngoni women intervened to stop two quarrelling girls or to prevent an irate helper getting angry with the nurse girls.

The traits of justice and wisdom were important elements in the foundation of a Ngoni married woman's reputation. These were judged by her ability to allocate fair shares of food to servants and helpers, and to adjudicate wisely in women's disputes. Two proverbs referred particularly to dividing out food and were said about women who were either careless or stingy, and did not give their helpers a fair share. 'The finger-nails are surfeited' meant that the important people had eaten heartily without thought for others; and 'She has sliced one side only' had the same connotation, that those who had the supplies were keeping too much for themselves. Two other proverbs drove home this principle of *noblesse oblige* when emphasizing the responsibilities of married women: 'The elephant is not made heavy by its trunk,' and 'If the cows do not produce milk the herdsman is responsible.'

The ideal personality of Ngoni men

As we have just said, there was a definite personality pattern for young men whether married or not, which emphasized special qualities looked for in them, since on the whole they had relatively little authority or responsibility in village

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

affairs. Boys and young men were expected to be physically strong, and tough in the sense of being able to do hard tasks, walk long distances, dance for hours on end, and put up with hardships without grumbling. The senior men, as we saw earlier in this chapter hated to see idleness and set great store by young men working hard and persistently at any tasks undertaken. Several proverbs illustrated this quality and were used with effect when boys were found hanging round in the village doing nothing: 'Loitering eats the owner,' 'Laziness is eating dung,' 'The garden will not be tilled if you stop hoeing it.'

Other qualities desired in young men were all connected with the values of staying together as a family and as a village group, and of fostering mutual aid and trust within the groups of males in the dormitory and in the 'house'. It was believed that they ought to be acutely sensitive to the opinion of their contemporaries, a lesson which they learned from early days in the dormitory. To an insensitive person, showing intolerance and hard-heartedness they said: 'Were you made with dog's bones?' for dogs' bones were thought to be hard and unfeeling; or, 'You have a heart like a crocodile.' A fear of social ostracism was fostered all the time and expressed in the proverb: 'The bird eats in his own field.'

There were innumerable proverbs about willingness to co-operate in all the necessary tasks which fell to the young men, such as communal hoeing described in Chapter VII, or digging the grave at a funeral. 'The eyes for seeing,' 'One arm cannot crush a louse,' 'A river grows by its little streams,' 'The heifer grows by giving it more food'—these and many others were used to admonish those who held back and to encourage those who joined in willingly. Other proverbs warned against promises of help which were not kept. 'You will eat those of the axe but not those of the hoe' was said to someone who had counted on noisy assertions of forthcoming help, like the sounds made by the chopping of an axe, and not in quiet persistent help, like the smooth almost silent

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

APPENDIX

HOUSE, HUT, HOUSEHOLD, house is used in this book for the Ngoni system of grouping round the leading women who were wives or mothers of the head of the village. Hut is used for the actual building. Household is used for a group of huts within a compound, (See diagrams in Chapter IV. See also Ngoni of Nyasaland page 122).

PATRILOCAL), refers to residence of young couple after marriage

MATRILOCAL), —sometimes called virilocal and uxorilocal.

CLASSIFICATORY KINSHIP TERMS, extension of use of father, mother, brother, sister etc. to wide range of relatives.

PARALLEL COUSINS, children of father's brothers or mother's sisters—regarded as brothers and sisters and called such.

CROSS COUSINS, children of father's sisters or mother's brothers—with whom marriage was possible.

AGE-SETS, the special Ngoni terms are given in 'Ngoni of Nyasaland' page 144.

all children: *abantwana*

young men: *amajaha*

young girls before puberty: *inkakazana*

young girls after puberty: *izintombi*

III

VERNACULAR TERMS

AKULU	the important people
ALEZI	nursemaids
GOGO	grandparent or any very senior person
HLONIPA	respect
INDLUNKULU	chief hut in a village
INDUNA	official in village
IZIDANDANI	girl attendants
LAWENI	boys' dormitory
MWINI	owner—of a hut, cattle, dance group

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

segment of the residential system was recognized and institutionalized. Furthermore, it is in line with this thesis that, in arranging the marriage of recent captives, no great attention was paid to the establishment of farflung affinal links. Frequently a man and a woman who had been allocated to the same captor, and whom they both addressed as 'father', married one another on his instructions. Payments made in these marriages were small or non-existent. Recent captives were too low in the hierarchical structure to be concerned about reinforcing their position by horizontal ties. Their ambitions were directed to securing promotion by becoming lieutenants of their captors.

5. Autonomy of marriage

The pattern of segmentation of the residential system was continually changing. In part this was due to proliferation downwards, that is, by the process of increasing segmentation between brothers and between fathers' sons. In addition to this process political promotion and death in war altered the relative position of the segments associated with particular people. Marriage itself was a social process which, in so far as the relationship between man and wife was concerned, did not react directly on the residential system. This system was based on patrilineal descent and patrilocal residence and the movements of women, except at the level of the queens, were from one point of view irrelevant to the system. It was the grouping of children round their mother, in contrast to their father's children by other wives, which related the marriages of one generation to the patterns of segmentation of the next. A woman with no children in her house, whether her status was high or low, was structurally irrelevant to the residential system.

Marriage was also largely independent of the central government. Warfare, not domesticity, was the right and proper occupation of young men, and the age at which men married for the first time was probably about thirty. Informants all stressed that in the old days first marriage took place at later ages for both men and women than it does now. Wiese implies that girls were married any time after puberty,[59] but my informants stated that girls did not usually marry until they were aged about twenty to twenty-five. Men and women were organized into parallel age-sets, usually referred to as regiments, and corresponding regiments used to dance and frolic together. Sometimes a man took a wife from the regiment corresponding to his own, but there does not seem to have been any positive obligation to do so. Particular regiments were not prevented from marrying, as among the Zulu, and all the tales of the Paramount Chief intervening in the affairs of warriors are phrased in terms of the chief instructing a laggard to find himself a wife when all his age mates had already married. The chief did however interfere

[59] Wiese, op. cit. 'Expedição . . .', p. 473, and 'Geschichte . . .', p. 191.